

Voiding Cystourethrogram

Appointment Information

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Address: _____

Notes: _____

About

A Voiding Cystourethrogram (VCUG) is an x-ray exam performed to take pictures of the urinary system. It shows how well the bladder and its connecting tubes (called the urethra and the ureters) are working. The x-ray can also determine whether the flow of urine is normal as the bladder empties.

During the VCUG, you will be reclined on an x-ray table. Next, your pubic area will be cleaned and the radiologist will place a catheter, a small thin tube, into the urethra, the opening from which urine exits the body. After the catheter is in place, your radiologist will use the catheter to fill your bladder with a solution, called a contrast agent, which is intended to make seeing the organs easier.

With the contrasting agent in place, the radiologist then begins to take x-rays using a fluoroscope, an x-ray unit that is attached to a monitor or television screen. After the radiologist has obtained the images, your catheter will be removed and you will be asked to urinate into a receptacle while the radiologist continues to take x-rays.

Usually, patients are not restricted from eating or drinking before a VCUG. However, they may be restricted from urinating right before the test. A VCUG isn't usually painful, though the pressure of a bladder full of contrast agent can be uncomfortable to some.

Likewise, the insertion of the catheter can be uncomfortable. To help make it easier on the patient, some doctors may place a numbing agent around the urethra before inserting the catheter.

Preparations

There are no serious preparations that one needs to perform when undergoing a Voiding Cystourethrogram (VCUG), although you should make it a point to empty your bladder before the test.

You should inform your radiologist of any medications you are taking and if you have any allergies, especially to barium or iodinated contrast materials. Also inform your radiologist about recent illnesses or other medical conditions.

You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and to wear a gown during the exam.

Women should always inform their radiologist and x-ray technologist if there is any possibility that they are pregnant.